

## REMARKS

By the foregoing Amendment, the specification has been amended, and Claim 24 has been cancelled. Favorable consideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claim 24 was objected to on the grounds of insufficient antecedent basis for limitations in the claim; Claim 24 has been cancelled. The specification was also objected to as failing to provide antecedent basis for the recitation in Claim 29 of polishing the proximal end of the optical fiber for connection of the proximal end of the optical fiber to an optical fiber ferrule. In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, the specification has been amended in the paragraph at page 17, lines 7 to 26 to include support for this recitation in Claim 29, and it is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added to the disclosure. It is therefore believed that the objection to the specification regarding antecedent basis for Claim 29 can now be withdrawn.

Claims 1-6, 8, 13, 15-26, 28, 29 and 31-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Hillsman et al. in view of Lange et al. Claim 1 recites "a tapered reinforcing tube bonded to said optical fiber, said optical fiber extending therethrough, the reinforcing tube having a thickness that varies over the length of the reinforcing tube." Claim 20 similarly recites "the reinforcing tube having a thickness varying over the length of the reinforcing tube." The Examiner cited Hillsman et al. as a tapered reinforcing tube, but it is respectfully submitted that Hillsman et al. does not teach, disclose or suggest a reinforcing tube having a thickness varying over the length of the reinforcing tube. As is described in Hillsman et al. at col 8, lines 59-61, the

hypo tube 34 includes an intermediate tapered portion 42 connected to a reduced diameter portion 44 on its distal end. Lange 35 al. was cited as teaching the use of a metal braid, and does not teach, disclose or suggest a reinforcing tube having a thickness varying over the length of the reinforcing tube. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 1-6, 8, 13, 15-23, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 31-34 are novel and inventive over Hillsman et al. and Lange et al., and that the rejection applied to Claims 1-6, 8, 13, 15-23, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 31-34 on the grounds of obviousness from Hillsman et al. in view of Lange et al. should be withdrawn.

Claims 7 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Hillsman et al. in view of Lange et al. and further in view of Drasner et al., which was cited as teaching a connection hub attached to a shaft by an adhesive. However, it is respectfully submitted that Drasner et al. also does not teach, disclose or suggest a reinforcing tube having a thickness varying over the length of the reinforcing tube. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 7 and 27 are also novel and inventive over Hillsman et al., Lange et al., and Drasner et al., and that the rejection applied to Claims 7 and 27 on the grounds of obviousness from Hillsman et al. in view of Lange et al. and further in view of Drasner et al. should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 12-14, 31 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Amplatz et al., which was cited as disclosing a tapered reinforcing tube 26, in view of Lange et al. Amplatz et al. at column 2, lines 60-62 teaches that the elongated, flexible tubular shaft member 22 has a uniform outer diameter over substantially its entire length, and is only tapered over the short distal zone 26. Lange et

al. was cited as teaching the use of a metal braid. It is respectfully submitted that Amplatz et al. and Lange et al. do not teach, disclose or suggest a reinforcing tube having a thickness varying over the length of the reinforcing tube, that Claims 1, 12-14, 31 and 35 are novel and inventive over Amplatz et al. and Lange et al., and that the rejection of Claims 1, 12-14, 31 and 35 on the grounds of obviousness from Amplatz et al. in view of Lange et al. should be withdrawn.

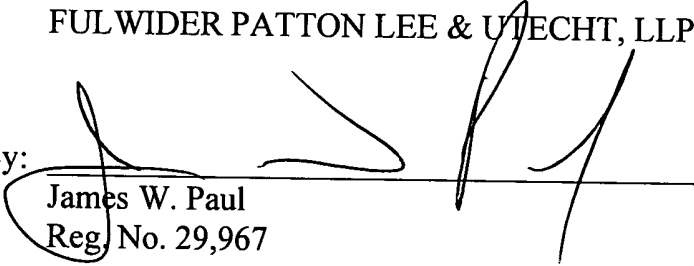
Applicant has reviewed the prior art made of record but not applied, and it is believed that these references are no more pertinent than the references actually applied.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application should now be in condition for allowance, and an early favorable action in this regard is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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